

Seven Steps to a Successful Internship

Lessons from the Field, by Chris Mengay

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Congratulations on your new internship! Now that you have the job, you want to do everything in your power to make the most of the opportunity. After six internships, I've seen what works and what doesn't. Take a look at the following list of what I believe to be some of the most important ways you can make your internships a success. Good luck!

1. Arrive early and stay late.

You don't need sleep. For starters, make 5:00 am your new 8:00 am. You may not be getting paid, but this is one surefire way to get noticed as a valuable employee and someone who's dedicated to the job.

2. Learn everyone's name and remember it.

It's a simple courtesy that few people take the time to do. Don't you like being called by your name (instead of "*Chief, Dude, etc.*")? Make the workplace more personal and others will make the same effort toward you.

3. Volunteer for the jobs no one wants.

As of now, you love taking out the trash and cleaning up the break room. Be the person who steps up and does the dirty work. It's not glamorous, but it's helpful to everyone and will get you noticed in the long run.

4. Project confidence, not cockiness.

Just like Johnny Cash would say, you need to walk the line when it comes to projecting confidence. Be sure of yourself and your own opinions, but don't bulldoze over others if they disagree. Compromise can be virtuous.

5. Understand the workings of your organization as a whole.

It's important to know where you fit and how your job affects the company on a large scale. Departmentalization and narrow-mindedness can be dangerous in terms of career advancement opportunities.

6. Smile.

You spend a lot of time at work. For your health and the health of everyone around you, smile. Your coworkers will appreciate it.

7. Try new things.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. It's important to be open to new ideas and assignments. You might discover a new passion or learn something you didn't know.

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